

MEETING MINUTES
WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ADVISORY COUNCIL
10:00 am, Friday, February 23, 2018
Metcalf Building
1520 E. Sixth Ave., Helena, MT 59620

Council Members Present:

Trevor Selch
Earl Salley
Craig Workman
Adam Sigler (phone)
Michael Wendland (phone)
Stevie Neuman (phone)

Council Members Absent:

Karen Bucklin Sanchez

Montana Department of Environmental Quality Staff Members Present:

Myla Kelly
Sandy Matule
Chace Bell
Greg Butts
Elizabeth Murray-Henrikson
Katie Makarowski
Jon Dillard
Darrin Kron

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Selch called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Selch brought forward the approval of the agenda with two briefing items for the meeting. Hearing no changes or additions to the agenda, Chairperson Selch moved to approve the agenda. Council member Salley moved the agenda be approved, and it was so moved.

ADAM SIGLER'S INTRODUCTION

Alternate council member Sigler has been filling in for Kathleen Williams and DEQ is in the process of getting Adam appointed as a council member because Williams is stepping down from the Council. Chairperson Selch invited Adam to introduce himself to the council.

Sigler works for Montana State University Extension in Bozeman and has been a water quality specialist for Extension since December 2004. Kathleen reached out to him to ask if he would be willing to take

over her position on the council. It sounded interesting to him. He is currently working on his Ph.D. and a full-time job, so he takes on new things with a lot of caution. Understanding what the council does, it seems like it is well-aligned with his interface with MSU research and public education around water resources across Montana. He is interested in how WPCAC works and contributing to the council.

Chairperson Selch welcomed Adam and reminded the council they are waiting on final approval of his appointment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairperson Selch asked if there were any changes or edits to the January minutes. There being no changes, council member Salley moved to accept the minutes. The move was seconded by council member Workman, and the minutes were approved as recorded.

BRIEFING ITEMS

Lewistown Drinking Water – Elizabeth Murray-Henrikson and Greg Butts

The handout for this presentation can be found at <http://deq.mt.gov/Water/WQINFO/wpcac>

Murray-Henrikson gave background on total coliform rule and how the revisions in 2016 differ from the old 1989 rule. The total coliform rules aim to protect public health by ensuring the integrity of drinking water distribution systems. The revisions require water systems identify and fix bacterial contamination and replaced the *E. coli* maximum contaminant level (MCL) with a treatment technique trigger (TT). The revisions also modified public notice requirements so that they are no longer required for total coliform violations alone. Total coliform indicates a potential pathway for contamination, but alone does not indicate a potential health threat. Public notification is required for an *E. coli* violation that is not addressed, if the water system fails to do an assessment, or if 3 or more triggered assessments occur within 12 months. She explained how the handout she provided shows a history of total coliform violations in Lewistown.

The floor opened to questions.

Council Member Workman asked if Lewistown chlorinates?

Murray-Henrikson responded that they do not have a treatment facility that is required at this time. They do shock disinfect occasionally. DEQ is working with them now to install a short-term chlorinator so they can get chlorination throughout their entire distribution system. They have a difficult system to try and get chlorination to the entire system – Greg Butts will cover that later.

Council Member Salley asked, What is their source of water?

Murray-Henrikson responded that it is Big Spring Water, so it is a spring source – determined to be groundwater.

Council Member Sigler asked if there had been any testing on the source water?

Murray-Henrikson responded that there has been – under the groundwater rule when a system has a total coliform positive, they are required to sample their run water sources – all active sources. Every time this system has had a trigger they have to sample their spring. Their spring has historically come back clean. In the last couple of years there as been one total coliform hit on the spring samples. The contamination seems to be a distribution issue. They have never had an *E. coli* hit or any type of fecal contamination.

Murray-Henrikson turned briefing over to Greg Butts:

Butts reports that he supervises 10 field inspectors who have visited Lewistown at different times – they inspect every 3 years – the last was in 2015, and the next will be in 2018. Lewistown has a very large spring which they only partially use. There are no pumps involved until it goes into the first storage tank where they use boosters to lift the water. Lewistown some issues that they have been working on:

1. One issue was a pipeline that runs 6 or 7 miles into town and services 3 subdivisions and 14 homes. DEQ was not aware that they were serving water off that main until after the third visit to the site.
2. One of the complicating issues with Lewistown is that about the time DEQ was switching over from the total coliform rule to the revised total coliform rule, the system had enough violations under the total coliform rule that they had gone into enforcement, yet the system was still inciting treatment triggers under the revised total coliform rule.
3. During a Level 2 investigation (in which the goal is to determine where contamination came from), DEQ discovered that a historic unused line with stagnant water may be a source of bacteria in the distribution. They've since drained that line.
4. Lewistown has a complicated system with 2 pressure zones, some boosted water and some gravity flow. It is difficult to disinfect from the spring because there is no facility there to inject the chlorine. Every time DEQ visited the site new things were learned or revealed to DEQ inspectors. DEQ provided them with information to resolve their problem(s) and keeps in close contact with the City.
5. DEQ told Lewistown that their engineer needs to work on and submit a disinfection plan – which they did. Everything is set to go as of a week ago – Lewistown will analyze for chlorine at upper and lower boosters and will chlorinate the entire system, including from the spring, for 60 days. Lewistown is providing public notice to all citizens that they are going to chlorinate. Citizens don't like the idea of chlorine in the water.
6. DEQ will visit Lewistown during the chlorination to see how it is going – if not okay, they will need to chlorinate full-time.

Council Member Salley: Is this gas chlorination?

Butts responded that Lewistown is using a sodium type chloride – a liquid.

Council Member Wendland: What is the age of the water system? What kind of line is it?

Butts responded that he is not the most knowledgeable about the system, but what he sees from the reports from his staff is the city has good plans about what they have in the ground. It is an older distribution system through the main part of town. One of the mains that comes from the spring to town is newer – about 15 years old. The other one is a very old 20" main. DEQ would like Lewistown to get rid of it because that was the plan – to put in a new one and get rid of the old one. The old one has all the service connections off it and that never happened – they didn't transfer them to the new line. It

would be a big job for them to decommission the 20" line that they have. There are places where it is exposed – there are 7 creek crossings between the spring and town. At DEQ's request the city has checked for leaks in their system and found some leaks that were repaired – none were significant.

Council Member Sigler asked about the distribution of the coliform sampling.

Butts responded that samplings have been done all over the system – couldn't identify where the problem is exactly. Mappings have been done where the samples were conducted.

Myla Kelly asked if there have been any illnesses reported that could be linked to this.

Butts responded that he is not aware of any.

Council Member Salley asked if Big Spring Water Company has their own source?

Butts replied that their bottling plant is in town. Most bottling companies have some kind of treatment in the bottling process. The bottling plant uses Lewistown's distribution system.

John Dillard commented on Myla Kelly's question regarding health issues – DEQ has been working with the Department of Public Health and Human Services – keeping them aware of the situation. DPHHS has been monitoring the health facilities in Lewistown for any unusual outbreaks they may have, and there has been nothing identified to date.

Smith River Monitoring & Algae App – Chace Bell & Katie Makarowski

Bell & Makarowski's Presentation can be found at <http://deq.mt.gov/Water/WQINFO/wpcac>.

Bell works in the Monitoring and Assessment Section and this is a new project on the Smith River nuisance algae. Reports from the public in 2015 about algae growth in the Smith River reaching nuisance levels and impacting recreation activities prompted this project. Since 2015 DEQ has gathered information to identify that this is a problem that has become more severe. The algae growth is happening earlier in the year and more often. The purpose of this project is to determine if there is a specific cause and where that cause is. Once DEQ understands better that, DEQ will move forward to consider possible management options to get the problem under control.

Bell reports the next step will be public engagement – is DEQ missing anything? There will be two public meetings – one on February 28 from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm in Helena and March 1 from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm in White Sulphur Springs.

Council Member Sigler commented that the Montana Climate Assessment's water section may be poised to analyze flow and snow water equivalent for the Smith River watershed.

Makarowski gave a presentation on a mobile device app. People are interested in the Smith River algae issue. Since access is limited via float permits, there isn't a lot of data about the river. DEQ applied for funds to collect data regarding the algae. DEQ partnered with EPA and Fish, Wildlife and Parks to create a mobile device app. People can download the app for free in any of the app stores. As with any app, a user will get an icon on their device. Katie described how the app works – hoping to have it launched soon. People can take photos when on the Smith and submit to DEQ – condition of algae, end of trip information, folks can give a description of what they are seeing, and answer a couple of questions.

DEQ will be able to map the photos and show when and where the algae are growing on the Smith River.

Council Member Sigler recommended suggesting certain locations (e.g., certain camp sites) for people to take photos so that there is quasi-repetition in the mobile device app data.

Makarowski replied that DEQ is just hoping for good spatial coverage and wanted users to take photos when the inspiration struck.

Council Member Neuman asked if they were thinking of asking landowners for help with monitoring sites.

Makarowski responded that DEQ prioritizes reaching out to private landowners.

Public Comment

Chairperson Selch asked for public comment. There was none.

Agenda items for next meeting – Kelly reminded the council that the next meeting in May will have radioactive waste storage and remediation activities at the Mike Horse Mine on the agenda.

Council Member Neuman suggested the Belt abandoned mine lands and water leakage.

Motion to adjourn by Vice Chair Earl Salley. Meeting adjourned.